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Letter from Augustin Hibbard to William [Hibbard] 1868 Feb. 28

Augustin Hibbard

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Saw Juan Island February 28th 1868

My Dear Brother

Since I last wrote you, I have received two letters from you, one, under date of Oct. 8th, and one of Dec. 17th, The one of Oct. 8th enclosing one from Mother under date of Sept. 14th. I commenced an answer to your letter of Oct. soon after receiving it, but having to go to Portland at that time, I thought that I would finish it on the voyage down, and mail it there, the weather was rough that I was unable to do this, and on my arrival at Portland I was so ill from exposure on the voyage that I deferred writing there, and thus it has gone on, until the arrival of yours of Dec. 17th, to day. I feel the necessity of making any excuses, but have taken my pen at once to do what I should have done before. Since my last to you our Heavenly Father has been very merciful to me indeed in dealings with me, He has blessed me with excellent health nearly the whole time, and has preserved me when to the human eye I was in great danger, and stood, as I thought, face to face with death. On the 29th of Nov last I was on board of a Schooner of 300 Tons and at the mouth of the Columbia River. We started to go in over the Bar (which is a dangerous one) about 3 O'clock in the afternoon, with a favorable, but light breeze, with rather a heavy swell on. When in the most dangerous part of the Channel, the wind died away

and left us becalmed on the very edge of the breakers, with ^{a strong} current, and swell, setting us directly into them. There was barely time to let go the anchor and check the vessel's headway ere she would have been where nothing could have saved her, this was done, and we were safe, unless a storm should rise before the wind and tide would serve, to enable us to get into the river, or out to sea again, this was about 5 O'clock, and it was getting dark, about nine, the wind arose strong from the west, and by ten, it was blowing a terrific gale and, right on to the breakers, no one on board had much hope of seeing another morning. We had but one anchor to trust to, as we had lost one four days previous, and if that did not hold, we were lost, nothing could save us our cargo, consisting of 200 Tons of Lime Stone & 100 Tons of Lime, was of such a nature, that there was no hope for us if the vessel once got into the breakers. We had but one Boat on board, and that was stove, in a very short time after the gale struck us. The gale continued until eight in the morning, and there we lay through that long night with those awful breakers all around us and seas forty or fifty feet in height pouring continually down upon us, we had our flying Gib, and flying Gib Boom carried ^{away} by one of them, Bulwarks stove, and the Cook's galley washed overboard. We had all, to keep on deck as good part of the time in order to keep everything as snug as possible, and to lose no chance of life, through carelessness or the neglect of any precaution. I was washed three

times that night off my feet, and once nearly overboard. When the gale first struck us there was some confusion, as the sailors were badly frightened and not inclined to work, they soon listened to reason however, and we went to work to make everything as secure as possible, while at this, I had no thoughts other than those appertaining to whatever I was doing, to do my duty, firmly, and faithfully, and calmly to leave the result in the hands of our Heavenly Father, was my first resolve, and I did so. After we had done all that could be done, I had time for thought and I went to my room, to be by myself, and to hold communion with that God, in whose presence I expected so shortly to appear. I sat down to compose my thoughts for prayer and supplication, all of my past life was presented to my mind in vivid, and awful distinctness. How short the space of time it seemed to have occupied, and yet, how many acts to regret, bitterly regret. But thank to God, there was peace, and joy in my soul, and I could hopefully trusting in His mercy, say Thy will Heavenly Father, not mine, be done. The awful judge was lost in the Heavenly Father, whose love for his children is beyond our comprehension. I shall never cease to render humble thanks to God for the experience of that night, never before has my soul been so completely ~~not~~ filled with a sense of His divine love, never before have I felt that nearness to God, which I felt that night. I had no fear, when I saw those awful waves coming down upon us, I could, as I clung to mast, or rope, calmly look at them

and say, God is in Them, I am as safe in His hands here, as I would be upon the land. Oh how near, and how precious ^{aid} our Heavenly Father seem to me His comforting words drove away all fear and anxiety. 'Ye are mine, and I am yours. My everlasting strength is underneath you. Trust me and love me, and I will bear you up, and you shall be saved.'

About eight o'clock the next morning ^{the wind} changed to the North East, which was favorable for going to sea, and at ten, we succeeded in getting our anchor, and making sail were soon in smoother waters. My prayers that night, were for others, not for myself, dear brother. I could not pray for what I felt so fully assured was granted me. It seemed to me that I could only praise God, and render thanks. Let us praise Him, for His mercy endureth for ever. I am now in excellent health. but am still far from being prospered in pecuniary matters although I continue to keep the business going, and have hopes of succeeding yet. Give my kindest love to all the dear ones, and write soon. I will write again in a short time. I do not get any of the papers or pamphlets you write of having mailed to me.

And now trusting, and hoping that our Heavenly Father is blessing and prospering you in all things
I Remain

Your Affectionate Brother
Augustin